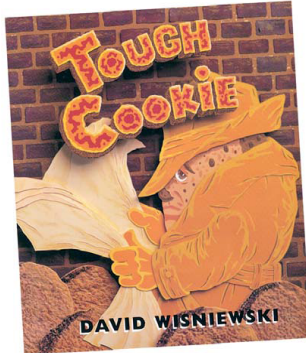


Book of the Month- November

Tough Cookie

By: David Wisniewski



Even though life is tough at the bottom of the cookie jar, Tough Cookie can handle just about anything. That is, until Fingers drops in and spells trouble for the whole jar! Next, Crumbs and his ex-girlfriend come to the rescue. Tough Cookie learns that being smart is just as important as being tough!

Reading strategies from *Strategies That Work* by Stephanie Harvey.

Mailbox companion website- Bookbag page

Pre-reading strategies:

Discuss the genre of the story- which is mystery. What is contained in a mystery? (problem/solution, bad guy, good guy, suspense, unknown, clues)

Discuss what it means if someone is a "tough cookie."

Take a Picture walk: Ask the students what they notice about the character on the cover. (He is a cookie; He is in a trench coat. He looks like private investigator.) Other things they might notice; all of the characters are cookies, the fingers on some of the pages, the crumbs at the bottom of the cookie jar.

Before reading the story, it is important to understand the setting. Discuss what the **setting** of the story is: **It describes the time and place in which a story takes place, and the setting often influences the thoughts and actions of the characters and the line of the plot.**

Building Prior Knowledge:

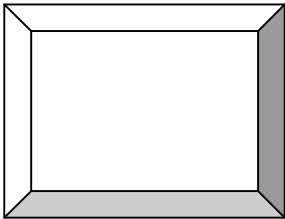
The setting of the story is the cookie jar. Before looking at the first two pages of the book, discuss what the kids know about a cookie jar. (It is a place to put cookies, Cookies that stay in it a long time get stale, crumbs are in the bottom, or broken cookies. etc.) It is important to understand the way the jar is laid out and the workings of the jar before reading. Use elements that one uses to read non-fiction texts to identify the parts of the cookie jar. Discuss labeling and the bolded words that describe each layer of the jar and then read each layer.

Ideas to discuss before reading: sell-by date, wanted poster, play on words: Crocker observatory, Pillsbury expressway, what it means when it says this at the bottom of the jar: "Visitors to the area should travel in groups."

Set the purpose for reading: Tell the students that they need to be prepared to talk about why the setting is important to the story and how the setting affects the characters' actions.

During Reading:

Using Context Clues: The vocabulary words that may give them trouble are hijack, lousy, sidles, and fracas. As they are reading they are to listen for the words in the context of the story. Fill out this form for two of the words.

WORD 	What do you think this word means? _____ _____ What clues in the story help you figure out this word? _____ _____
Dictionary Definition: _____	
What type of context clue is given:	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"><input type="checkbox"/> Example <input type="checkbox"/> Compare/Contrast <input type="checkbox"/> Definition within text</div>



Play on Words and Figurative Language:

To understand figurative language students must see beyond the literal meaning of the words so that they read the text at a deeper level.

There are many instances where the author uses figurative language. There are parts where he uses a play on words to add humor. Listen and look at the following and have your students figure out what they mean and how they are used to make the story funny.

They call me tough cookie. I guess I am. Came from a regular batch. Lots of dough. Lived the high life. Top of the Jar. Then I hit bottom and stayed here. It was rough. Still is. But you get used to it. Life's still sweet. Just a little stale.

His friends' names are Chips and Pecan Sandy. Why is that funny?

Knocking back a cup of coffee (Idiom)

Pecan sandy is described as being "Store bought."

Easy on the eyes. (idiom)

This cookie don't crumble.

Chips is described like this: "He's chewed up pretty bad."

A slap stings my cheek, just like a velvet bee. (simile)

They talk tough, but they are marshmallows. (metaphor)

I'm a nutbar! (metaphor)

Darkness covers me like a damp sponge. (simile)

Fingers gives them the brush-off and makes another grab.

You're a smart cookie.

After Reading Strategies:

Discussing the Purpose for reading: How does the setting affect the character's actions in the story? (Discuss the different levels in the cookie jar and how the main character uses the jar to help him successfully beat fingers.

Comprehension Q. Matrix: Click on the following link: ([Reading Matrix](#))

Here is a collection of 36 question prompts based on the levels of Bloom's created by Chuck W. Wiederhold. To use the matrix, students write and process higher level questions based on the story.

How the matrix works:

The top row of questions is from the lower levels of Bloom's. Each row of question prompts represents a higher level of Bloom's, the highest being the bottom row. What you can do ahead of time is decide how you want to use the rows. To get your kids to use higher order thinking skills, use the bottom row. Or you could manipulate the rows into different formats to meet your student's needs by choosing to use all one row, or by making a row be from top to bottom. If you use the questions in vertical strips, the questions that the student writes will be the about the following: events, situations, alternatives, people, reasons and possibilities. If your students use the horizontal row of questions, they will be writing ones that are in present, past, possibilities, probabilities, predictions, and imagination.

Comprehension Matrix Activity:

After reading the book, pass out the Matrix in the format that you have decided upon. Next have the kids work alone or in pairs to write questions that pertain to the story. For example, in the first horizontal row of words, the questions might be: (Notice that they are mostly "knowledge level" of Blooms.)

- What is the "bad guy's" name in the story?
- Where does the story take place?
- Which policeman is "chewed up" by the bad guy ?
- Who is the friend that was attacked by fingers?
- Why is cookie jar the perfect setting for this story?
- How is Pecan Sandy able to help at the end of the story?

After the students write their questions, you could have them swap and write the answers or discuss them in small, discussion groups. This is a great way to find out if they read the story and comprehended it as well.

Point of View: (Adapted from Mailbox Bookbag activities)

The evil villain, Fingers, is the cookies' greatest enemy. But how would the story be different if it were told by Fingers? After reading, ask students to ponder this point-of view question. Then draw a T chart on the board. Label the first column "Cookies." Ask students to recall story events and associated feelings from the cookies' points of view. Label the second column "Fingers." Ask students to infer Fingers' perspective and feelings about each event. Write students' responses in the corresponding section of the chart.

Cookies' points of view

Fingers' point of view

Cookies' points of view	Fingers' point of view